

## Revising requirements for reporting school district dropouts

HB 1518 by Dutton (West)

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**DIGEST:** HB 1518 would have required school districts to evaluate the effectiveness of each program described in campus and district improvement plans aimed at reducing dropout rates. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) standards and definitions for dropouts and for students completing school would have been subject to review by the Legislative Budget Board, the state auditor, and the comptroller before TEA could implement them. TEA would have had to evaluate systematically the effectiveness of accelerated instruction and support programs and to share with local districts the information it collected. If this evaluation could not be done with existing resources, the education commissioner would have had to withhold evaluation funds from total compensatory education allotments.

The commissioner could have granted a one-year exemption from audit requirements to districts that consistently reduced the disparity in performance between students at risk of dropping out and other students. No exemptions would have been granted to districts that did not make consistent progress in reducing dropout rates.

**GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:** "House Bill No. 1518 would require the review of the Texas Education Agency's dropout data definitions by the comptroller of public accounts, the state auditor, and the Legislative Budget Board. However, I am signing Senate Bill No. 186 [by Janek], which will require the Texas Education Agency to use the federal dropout definitions adopted by the National Center for Education Statistics. Senate Bill No. 186 removes all state agency discretion regarding the adoption of dropout definitions for use in the state's education accountability system, eliminating the need for a review of the state's dropout definitions.

"The bill also seeks to grant mandate relief to school districts relating to compensatory education funding audits. However, I have signed House Bill No. 3459 [by Pitts and McCall] and Senate Bill No. 894 [by Bivins] to provide greater opportunities for relief from compensatory education audits by exempting school districts that succeed in improving the performance of students at risk of dropping out of school. The approach taken by these bills is consistent with my desire to provide mandate relief to school districts and my High School Completion Initiative's goal of ensuring that students do not drop out on life by dropping out of school."

**RESPONSE:** Rep. Harold Dutton, author of HB 1518, was unavailable for comment. Sen. Royce West, the Senate sponsor, had no comment on the veto.

**NOTES:** HB 1518 was analyzed in Part Two of the April 29 *Daily Floor Report*. Analyses of the following bills also appeared in the *Daily Floor Report*: HB 3459 (May 10, Part One), SB 186 (May 26, Part One), and SB 894 (May 19).